

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

A packing element for a blowout preventer includes an annular flexible non-metallic composite body disposed about a longitudinal axis that is adapted to be compressively displaced inwardly towards the axis. A plurality of non-metallic composite inserts are embedded in the body in generally circular fashion spaced apart in respective radial planes extending from the axis for reinforcing the body. Each of the inserts includes upper and lower flanges, and a web element extending between the flanges. The web element includes trailing and leading edges, each having outer arcuate surface that are substantially semicircular in cross-section for distributing the loads applied to a bond line between the insert and the flexible non-metallic composite body during the operation of the packing element. A central rib extends between the leading and trailing edges. The replacement of metal inserts with non-metallic composite inserts eliminates sparks and scoring of string, which leads to explosions.